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ABSTRACT

Student leadership can become a malevolent force which can destroy or undermine individuals as well as the school community. Student leaders' roles in schools can also, however, be benevolent, leading to both personal development and school/community development. In schools for blacks in South Africa, black power and student power may combine to form black student power. Educators should acknowledge the presence of student power, identify student leaders properly, develop their leadership potential, and give them scope to exercise their leadership in order that student leaders become a benevolent force in their school communities. Leadership potential and ability as a manifestation of giftedness is recognized universally in definitions of giftedness, but leadership development is often neglected. A pyramid-chart illustrates the delineation of levels of students in need of leadership education, accompanied by an inverted pyramid diagram which represents the quantity and content of leadership education needed for each corresponding level. Opportunities should be created to develop student leadership potential through such activities as student councils, committees, class captains, bus captains, etc. The J. F. A. Swartz Educational Leadership Project is described as an ad hoc project of the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa) which presents leadership seminars for student leaders and educators. (JDD)

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STUDENT LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS : BENEVOLENT OR MALEVOLENT

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1. Introduction

If the role of student leaders in schools is analyzed, it is apparent that they can play a significant role in the well-being of any school community. It may be malevolent if they are not given scope, if their role is not clearly defined and if they are not officially recognized. In this case, student leadership may turn out to be a malevolent force which could destroy or undermine both individuals and the school community. Student leaders' roles in schools may also, however, be benevolent and it may lead to both personal development of the individual and to the development of the particular school community.

2. The role of student leaders in the recent crisis in schools for Blacks in South Africa

During the three years 1985 to 1987 South Africa has experienced the most severe education crisis in the history of this country. It is not within the scope of this paper to eloborate on the real reasons for this. One aspect of the crisis which will be dealt with, however, is the significant role of student leaders.

The existence of black power is not denied and there is agreement that this can be a powerful force. Likewise, the existence of student power is generally recognized and it, too, is a force to be reckoned with. If these two powers are combined to form black student power it is, obvious that a new powerful force would come into being and this would require educationalists' urgent attention. It is further hypothesized that black or white or any other student powers are forces to be reckoned with and forces which, if they are subdued, or not allowed to operate, or not given the opportunity or scope to develop, may go underground and become a force for destruction. The same hypothysis can be stated in positive terms: If we as educationalists...

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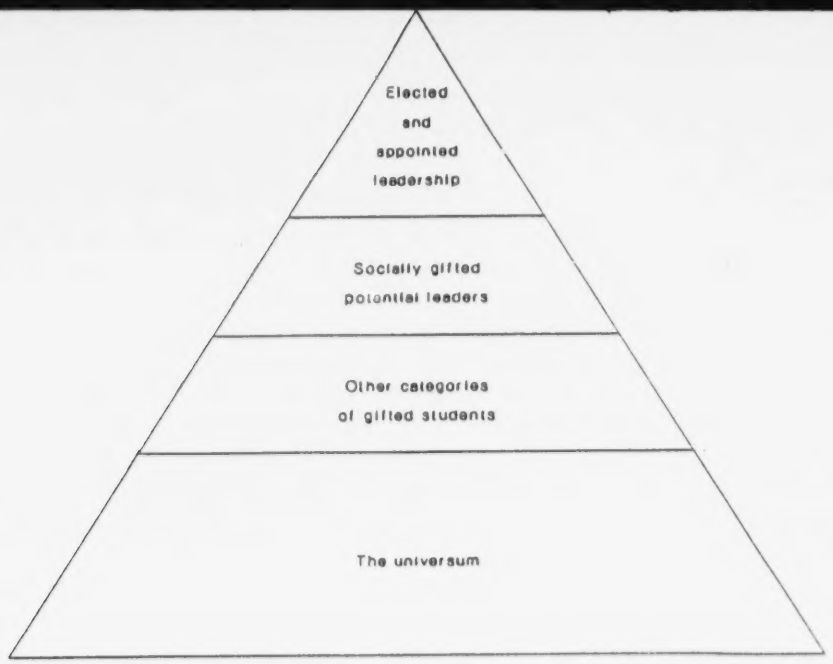
- acknowledge the presence of student power
- identify student leaders properly
- develop their leadership potential
- give them scope to exersize their leadership

THEN STUDENT LEADERS CAN BE A BENEVOLENT FORCE IN THEIR VARIOUS SCHOOL COMMUNITIES.

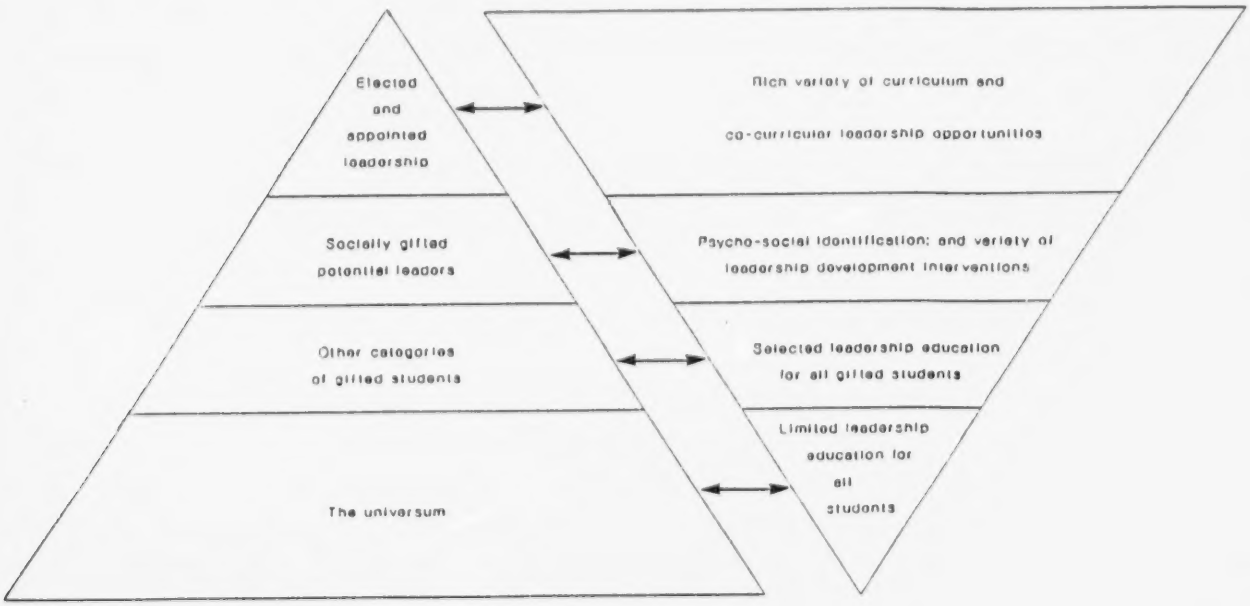
3. Some fundamental issues regarding leadership and the resulting challenge for the progressive school

The world is experiencing a severe leadership crisis in the eighties and real leaders are scarce. At the turn of the century the estimated world population will be about 6 000 million and for the welfare of the world there will have to be people to lead these masses. In South Africa the need for leaders is apparent when the ratio between the supply of highlevel manpower and the total population is analyzed. It is a very inadequate numerical ratio of 1 to 52 while in the developed countries of the world the comparable ratio varies between 1 to 10 and 1 to 17.

Leadership potential and ability as a manifestation of giftedness is recognized universally in definitions of giftedness. In most cases this is a theoretical exercise, because leadership development in schools is the most neglected aspect of schools' development of giftedness. It is undeniably true that we are not doing enough in our schools to cater for this specific need. If schools fail to develop leadership ability and potential, the latter may drain away in sand or may come to the fore negatively. It is undoubtedly true that not only the psycho-socially gifted or the academically gifted should be identified and educated as leaders of the future, but rather THAT EVERY STUDENT SHOULD BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THE POTENTIAL HE/SHE POSSESSES. The following groups of students who are in need of leadership education, exist in every school:



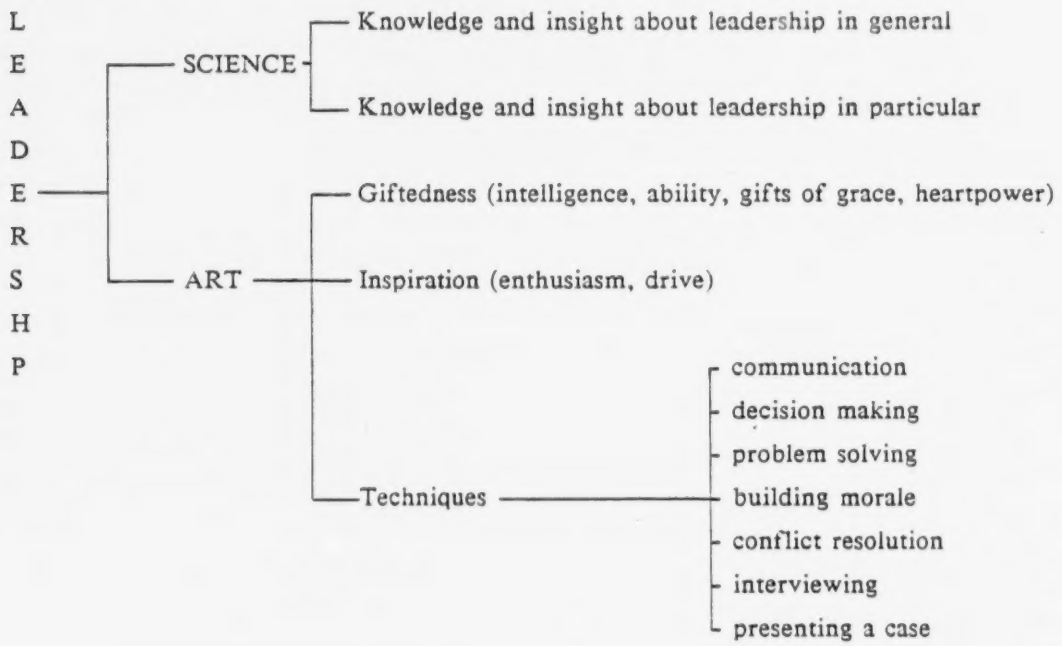
This pyramid can be supplemented by an inverted pyramid which gives the relative quantitative content and time of leadership education (theory and practice) which should be considered for each corresponding level in pyramid one:



INVERTED PYRAMYDS : MATCHING GROUPS OF STUDENTS AND DIFFERENTIATED LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

The differentiared leadership education i.e. relative quantitative time and content for each grouping of students can be deduced from the inverted pyramids.

"Leaders are born not made" is a popular statement. This question is of particular importance to schools in their endeavours to formulate policy and instigate programmes for gifted student leaders. The question whether a leader is born or whether leadership can be learnt, is repeatedly asked. This age old question can be answered by referring to following analysis of the concept leadership:



AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT "LEADERSHIP"

Here leadership is portrayed as being both a science and an art. Leadership as a science implies that knowledge exists about leadership in general, as well as in specific areas. Leadership as an art is characterized by three components common to all arts : giftedness, enthusiasm (inspiration) and technique.

The concept leadership has two aspects : One related to knowledge and the other to art. Because the aspect related to knowledge can be learnt and because the clearly definable skills or techniques of leadership as an art can be mastered, there is no doubt that aspects of LEADERSHIP CAN BE LEARNT THROUGH study and practice. It must be kept in mind, though, that leadership also includes components of giftedness and enthusiasm, which if they can acquired at all, can only be learnt with great difficulty. The popular statement that "Leaders are born and not made", has a small grain of truth

to the extent that the art of leadership involves giftedness and inspiration. In other words, not every man in the street is destined to be a real leader in spite of all the schooling or preparation.

4. Provision for leadership in progressive schools

It is essential that a progressive school and teachers should present adequate leadership education and should create opportunities supplemented by suitable content and structure for the development of the leadership potential of all its students.

In a recent survey of one particular high school (grades 8 to 12) for boys Slabbert found the following:

Total enrolment : 664

Number of leadership positions : 315

Training Programme	Leadership Position	Number of Students	Gr.8	Gr.9	Gr.10	Gr.11	Gr.12
√	Student Council	15					+
	Gaurdians	10					+
	Class Committees	50	+	+	+	+	+
	Sport Captains	90	+	+	+	+	+
	Committees of Clubs/Societies	80		+	+	+	+
√	Library Prefects	8	+	+		+	+
	Hostel Prefects	11				+	+
√	Bus Captains	27			+	+	+
	House Leaders	24	+	+	+	+	+
	TOTAL	315	37	36	30	56	156
	PERCENTAGE		11.7	11.5	9.5	17.8	49.5

The above table implies that the progressive school has very many leadership positions that have to be filled. The following is a summary of such positions:

Category of Students	Opportunity	Structure for Leadership Education
1. Elected student leaders	1.1 School governance	1.1.1 Class captains
		1.1.2 Assemblies conducted by student leaders
		1.1.3 Hostel prefects
		1.1.4 Student council
		1.1.5 Bus captains
		1.1.6 Library prefects
		1.1.7 House leaders
	1.2 Sport/Athletics	1.2.1 Captains
		1.2.2 Committee members
	1.3 Societies	1.3.1 Chairpersons
		1.3.2 Committee members
2. Potentially gifted student leaders with psycho-social potential and leadership ability	2.1 High profile leadership society	All identified gifted student leaders, other elected or nominated leaders.
	2.2 Apprenticeship as junior members of student council, hostel prefects, etc.	Training of juniors and screening mechanism for later selection
3. Other categories of gifted students	Developmental modules	Leadership content and skills to be presented to all gifted students
4. All students	4.1 Class related leadership education	Leadership as curriculum topic
	4.2 Subject related leadership education	Example of leaders in a particular subject area
	4.3 Assembly presentations by students	

5. Leadership development work and research at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa

5.1 The J.F.A. Swartz Educational Leadership Project

The work that is being doing in the area of gifted student leadership forms part of a larger research, teaching and development project on educational leadership at the University of Stellenbosch.

The J.F.A. Swartz Educational Leadership Project is responsible for leadership development in education and members present various leadership seminars for student and educational leaders. This particular group presents between twenty-five and forty-five leadership seminars annually for groups like the following:

- inspectors/superintendents of schools
- rectors/principals of teacher training colleges
- heads of teachers' centres
- beginner headmasters
- experienced headmasters
- heads of departments/subject heads
- university student leaders
- president of schools' student councils

The J.F.A. Swartz Educational Leadership Project is an ad hoc project of the University of Stellenbosch. Its work is based on the research on educational leadership and teaching innovations in the Faculty of Education. It is funded by Provincial Departments of Education and industrial concerns. The leadership team is comprised of about 30 educational leaders who include both lecturers and outstanding practitioners. The team is carefully selected and most leaders have been trained locally in andragogy (the art and science of teaching adults), leadership theory and the management of seminars. Five members have also completed advance training laboratories e.g. N.T.L. seminars in the USA.

The goal of the J.F.A. Swartz Educational Leadership Project is as follows:

- to promote educational and youth leadership development in South African schools;
- to foster instructional leadership as number one priority of educational leaders;
- to introduce educational innovation in South African Schools;
- to further teaching professionalism through continuing inservice programmes;
- to improve the quality of teaching in South African Schools.

5.2 The Annual Series of Seminars for Presidents of the Student Council

This series of seminars is based on the doctoral research studies of Firmani (1982) and Hanekom (1983) and the publication If you are elected - a guide for young leaders by Cawood and Swartz (1979) - this publication was completely updated and revised in 1989.

The main thrust of the ELOS (Educational Leadership Orientation Seminars)-project has been the annual series of seminars for Presidents of the Student Council. These three-day residential seminars are held during the first weekend of the school calender and are attended annually by the head boy and girl of approximately 90 % of the ±300 high schools in the Cape Province.

It developed from involvement in one seminar for Presidents in 1977 to 12 annual seminars in 1989. The twelve seminars are presented on a decentralized basis at different venues catering for approximately fifty student leaders from each different region. In addition to these leadership development opportunities for student leaders, a four hour module on student leadership is included in the annual seminar for beginner headmasters of the Cape Province and opportunities for the training of liaison teachers are made possible by the Teachers' Centres in each region. A basic philosophy on student leadership can thus be focused on at three levels i.e. headmaster, liaison teacher and student leader.

The following statistics reflect the positive effect that these seminars have had on the level of functioning of student councils in high schools in the Cape Province:

STUDENT COUNCILS IN THE CAPE PROVINCE

	1978	1988
Written constitution *	26%	66%
Written aims/objectives	38%	83%
Written year plan/programme	21%	67%
Sub-committee system	14%	76%
Own accommodation	35%	82%
Meet regularly	45%	70%
Work evaluated	25%	62%
Annual/quarterly report	21%	60%

* Note that the eight criteria tabulated here are inter alia part of the philosophy on student leadership propogated by the ELOS-team.

5.3 A magnet class for gifted student leaders

5.4 Class-based and subject-related leadership development for schools

5.5 Research on hostel prefects

5.6 Research on sport captains

5.7 Research on leaders in society

5.8 Research on class captains

The above mentioned six projects concerning student leadership are all receiving attention or are being implemented at present.

6. Conclusion

Contemporary society is marked by crisis, turmoil and strife. There is an urgent need for capable leaders to meet the exigencies of our times.

"Leadership is something to which many can contibute and from which many may gain in social confidence and skills, and it is in schools, more perhaps than anywhere else, that possibilities exist to manipulate positions and roles to these ends." (Edwards, 1974:32).